



DODGE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Dale J Schmidt Sheriff **Scott Smith** Chief Deputy

NEWS RELEASE DODGE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE LAUNCHES TEXT-to-911

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The Dodge County Sheriff's Office is pleased to announce that customers of the four major wireless carriers (AT&T, Sprint, Verizon & T-Mobile), along with US Cellular and Cricket, can now send text messages to 911 in Dodge County. There are more than 6,000 PSAPs (Public Safety Answering Points) in the nation and the Dodge County Sheriff's Office is one out of approximately 900 of those centers to voluntarily offer this new service.

While Text-to-911 is now available, it is not intended to replace a voice call to 911. A voice call to 911 is still the quickest, most efficient way to reach emergency help. Text-to-911 is intended for:

1. Any person who is deaf, hard of hearing or speech impaired.
2. Any situation where a person could be in danger if someone hears them placing a voice call, e.g., domestic violence or home invasion.
3. In an area with poor cell coverage where a voice call may not work but a text could.

Wireless customers in Dodge County should keep the following in mind when sending a text to 911:

1. While deactivated cellphones work for making voice calls to 911, wireless customers must have a texting plan in order to Text-to-911.
2. Texting to 911 is the same as texting anyone else. Just type **911** in the "To" field (no spaces or dashes) and begin the message.
3. Providing location information and nature of the emergency in the first text message is imperative since the Dodge County Sheriff's Office will only receive an approximate location of the cell phone.
4. Text-to-911 should only be used for emergency situations that require an immediate response from police, fire or emergency medical services. Non-emergency issues should still be called in on the Dodge County Sheriff's Office non-emergency line: **920-386-3726**

5. Text-to-911 currently uses (SMS) short message service (basic text messaging) so there is a 160-character limit per text. Also no pictures or videos at this time.
6. Text abbreviations or slang should never be used as it can confuse the 911 call taker and potentially delay emergency response.
7. Because Text-to-911 uses existing cellular towers within Dodge County to route the text to the Communications Center, if a person sends a text in a border area, the text may be routed to another county, just like a wireless voice call to 911. If the other county does not provide Text-to-911, the person will receive an automatic bounce back message from their wireless provider advising them that Text-to-911 is not available and to place a voice call to 911.
8. Roaming is currently not supported for Text-to-911. Therefore if a customer does not have wireless coverage within Dodge County they will receive a bounce back message from their provider advising them to place a voice call to 911.

Our public education theme as we get this message out to the public will be based on the national Text-to-911 motto: **"Call if you can, Text if you can't."**

If interested in assisting the Dodge County Sheriff's Office with Public Service Announcements for Text-to-911 please contact Sheriff Dale J. Schmidt.

